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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AO](#)
SUBJECT: ANGOLA: UNITA OPTIMISTIC ON RESOLVING
PARLIAMENTARIAN ISSUE

REF: A. LUANDA 00160
[1](#)B. LUANDA 00150

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CYNTHIA EFIRD FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (C) In a March 8, 2006 meeting with Ambassador Efird and AF/S Director Dan Mozena, UNITA President Isaias Samakuva, was optimistic that a solution regarding the substitution of sixteen UNITA National Assembly Deputies had been reached. Samakuva assured the Ambassador and AF/S Director Mozena that a number of prominent parliamentarians, including members of the MPLA, serving on the Constitutional Commission were rethinking their original positions and would likely support UNITA's decision to change the composition of its parliamentary group. A March 8-10 meeting of UNITA's Political Commission ended in the expulsion of four party members - three of the sixteen who challenged UNITA's leadership and Jorge Valentim, the former UNITA Minister of Tourism, who supported the sixteen in the National Assembly. UNITA's optimism and internal disciplinary measures are a positive sign that the debate over the sixteen parliamentarians is coming to end. However, it is clear that this controversy has forced UNITA and Samakuva off-message. Instead of showcasing its ability to manage affairs of state, UNITA has been forced to focus its attention on party stability and internal management. End Summary.

An Optimistic Samakuva

[1](#)2. (C) Since February 15, 2006, when National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) President Isaias Samakuva threatened to pull out of the Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and the National Assembly, UNITA officials have visited the Embassy on multiple occasions to share their thoughts on the situation (Ref A). In the most recent meeting, UNITA President Samakuva and Vice President Ernesto Mulato left UNITA's March 8-10 Political Commission meeting to call on Ambassador Efird, AF/S Director Dan Mozena, and the Pol/Econ Chief. Samakuva confidently stated that a solution had had been reached regarding the sixteen UNITA parliamentarians. Careful not to imply that a deal had been struck, Samakuva noted that a number of prominent parliamentarians, including some members of the MPLA serving on the Constitutional Commission had reconsidered the legal standing of their original decision (Ref B). The Constitutional Commission had ruled in favor of the sixteen deputies during the January 31, 2006 debate in the National Assembly. He indicated that these officials had reviewed the position of the Ethics Commission, which had originally sided with UNITA, and were beginning to "feel uneasy" about the commission's position. For Samakuva, change in the Constitutional Commission's stance would break the impasse and allow UNITA to move forward with its plans to substitute the sixteen parliamentarians.

[1](#)3. (C) During the meeting Samakuva foresaw the upcoming UNITA Political Commission's decisions by dividing the

sixteen deputies into three groups - those that were misled by others, those that were more "intentional" in their choices, and those who were the self-proclaimed leaders of the group. Samakuva noted that the leaders of the sixteen had high-level support within UNITA and the MPLA, but did not mention the names of the alleged accomplices. He said that all of the sixteen were undergoing disciplinary hearings. However, only the leaders of the group and those that supported the sixteen in parliament would face strong disciplinary sanctions from UNITA's Political Commission. Samakuva also said the key members of MPLA leadership, such as President of the National Assembly Roberto de Almeida, were concerned about the ramifications of UNITA's current position, but didn't feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in a public forum.

Four UNITA Members Expelled

¶4. (U) On March 10, UNITA's Political Commission announced the expulsion of Jose Kativa, Malheiro Elavoco, Mwanza wa Mwanza Simao, and Jorge Valentim from the party. The first three were the self-proclaimed leaders of the sixteen National Assembly Deputies. National Assembly Deputy Jorge Valentim had previously served as the Minister of Tourism, but recently has been an outspoken critic of UNITA's policies. His public confrontations with President Samakuva earned him a short-lived suspension from the party, but his support to the sixteen deputies caused his expulsion. Eugenio Manuvakola, former Secretary General of UNITA and ally of the sixteen, was suspended from all party activities for a year, but will continue to serve as a UNITA National Assembly Deputy. Valentim and the three other parliamentarians have publicly denied UNITA's power to remove

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them from the party and plan to continue serving as Deputies in the National Assembly regardless of their support within UNITA.

Comment

¶5. (C) Samakuva's comments to the Ambassador and Mozena are a dramatic change from his February 15 position. By staying out of the public spotlight, it appears that Samakuva allowed the MPLA enough political space to work out a feasible solution without appearing to back down. While Samakuva's optimism could be overstated, especially since it seems to be based on sources within the MPLA, it is unlikely that the MPLA's leadership is interested in losing its democratic credentials by seeming to bring down the main opposition party. Nonetheless, damage to UNITA has been done. While the expulsion of the four leaders shows a higher degree of internal unity, UNITA will now enter the upcoming electoral cycle off-message. Instead of discussing its ability to manage the affairs of state, they will be forced to answer repeated questions on internal stability and Samakuva's leadership. End Comment.

¶6. (C) Biographical Note: This was Mozena's first meeting with Samakuva. Mozena found the UNITA leader professorial, almost pedantic, in responding to questions during the lengthy meeting. Samakuva, who was immaculately attired in a suit that obviously had not been tailored in Africa, was quite articulate in English. Nonetheless, Samakuva lacked the fire and inspiration that were the trademarks of Savimbi, whom Mozena had heard speak in Washington nearly 15 years ago. Samakuva did not come across as a natural leader inspiring popular support.

¶7. AF/S Director Mozena has cleared this cable.

EFIRD